



Ontario



the Abused Child

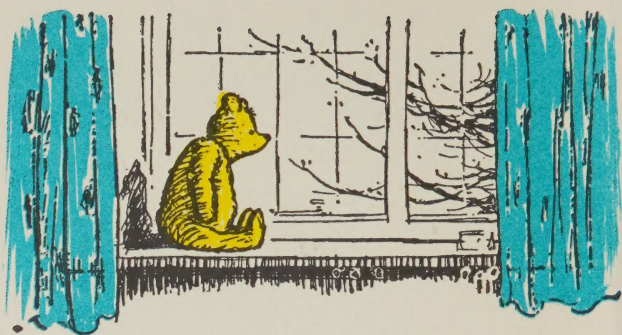
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Child Abuse . . .

How can we recognize it?

There are various signs of child abuse:

- the *battered* child may have abrasions, bruises, burns, scars or head injuries.
- a *neglected* child could appear severely malnourished and have chronic infections.
- the *sexually molested* child is usually a girl: she may have bruises, vaginal discharge, or lacerations. She (or her molested brother) could have VD.
- the *psychologically* abused child may either be unnaturally quiet and timid, or hyperactive; afraid of adults, or else turn to strangers for affection.

How common is it?

Child abuse is a major problem — medically, legally and socially. While there has been an increase in the number of *reported* child abuse cases, the majority still go unreported. This means that many abused children and their families are not receiving the help which is available to them.

Who would hurt a child?

Most of the people who hurt children:

- were themselves victims of child abuse
- are lonely or experiencing other difficulties
- have 'difficult' children.

The person who abuses a child needs just as much help as the helpless child.

What is Child Abuse?

Any child who has been:

- physically injured
- deprived of nutrition, care or affection
- sexually molested
- neglected or abandoned

is an abused child and in need of protection.

There are many types of neglect and abuse:

- physical (the 'battered' child)
- nutritional
- sexual
- psychological.

Children who are abused may be any age. However, the majority of abused children are under the age of three and most of those who are severely injured are infants.

Approximately:

- 1% of abused children will die.
- 20-30% of abused children will have life-long handicaps.



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What can we do about it?

If you suspect that a child is being abused — hurt or neglected — then get in touch immediately with your local Children's Aid Society or Family and Children's Services. Check the Telephone Directory for the office closest to you.

Referrals about child abuse can be made at any time, day or night, seven days a week. Each reported incident is confidential and is handled discreetly by an experienced social worker.



Many abused children grow up to be child abusers

Early reporting of child abuse is vital. A social worker can often provide the necessary help and guidance that prevents a major crisis. The vicious, self-perpetuating cycle of child abuse *can* be broken.

The Children's Aid Society and the Law

There are 50 Children's Aid Societies in Ontario. Each one is working co-operatively with local hospitals, police departments, schools and community organizations in the effort to help prevent child abuse. In order to provide this help, cases of child abuse or neglect must first be reported to them.

In accordance with THE CHILD WELFARE ACT of Ontario 1975, you are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse and the Children's Aid Society is required to investigate.

The Act states:

"Every person having information of the abandonment, desertion, physical ill-treatment or need for protection of a child, shall report the information to a Children's Aid Society or Crown Attorney."

"... The information is confidential or privileged, and no action shall be instituted against the informant unless the giving of information is done maliciously, or without reasonable and probable cause."

The Children's Aid Society is concerned about both the child's welfare and the abuser's rehabilitation. But the Society cannot act without information. It is up to you and other members of the community to report incidents of child abuse and neglect.



What are *you* doing about child abuse?

To learn more about child abuse, to find out where in your community help is available, contact your local hospital, Children's Aid Society, Family and Children's Services, Parents' Anonymous groups or the police.

If you are concerned about a child who may be in danger, contact your local Children's Aid Society, Family and Children's Services, or police department immediately.

VF ONTARIO

A child is crying, or cannot cry ...
Remember,
Help *is* available

Phone:



Ontario

Ministry of
Community and
Social Services



The Hospital
for Sick Children,
Toronto

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